

Research Update: Universal Nation/Universal State

Statewide Office of Family Court Services - March 1991

During the 1980's, America's ethnic makeup diversified at a speed unprecedented in our century. According to demographer Ben Wattenberg, "This is the dawning of the first universal nation¹. California is in the forefront of this social and demographic transformation. Twenty years ago, racial and ethnic minorities accounted for just one-fifth of the total state population. Today, two-fifths of all Californians are from minority backgrounds.² By the year 2000, California will become a "majority of minorities".⁵

The information in this report is based on recently-released data from the 1990 Census. Because officials in many urban areas are currently charging that minority populations were undercounted in the 1990 Census, these numbers may be revised. The Census Bureau has until July 15, 1991, to adjust numbers based on follow-up interviews and recounts.

STATEWIDE TRENDS

- 29 of the 30 most diverse communities in the United States are found in California.³
- Three California counties already are composed of a majorities of minorities. According to the 1990 Census, minorities collectively constitute 71% of the population in Imperial County, 59.2% in Los Angeles County, and 53.4% in San Francisco County.⁽³⁾
- Younger age groups have wider ethnic diversity. Already, a majority of Californians under the age of five are minorities. A plurality of public school students will be minorities by the early part of this decade.⁴

HISPANICS

- Among all states, California is second only to New Mexico in its concentration of Hispanics, who constitute 26% of the state's population. 35% of the nation's total Hispanic population lives in California.¹
- The five California counties with the highest proportions of Hispanic residents are Imperial (65.8%), San Benito, (45.8%), Tulare (38.8%), Los Angeles (37.8%), and Fresno (35.5%).³

ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

- California is second only to Hawaii in its concentration of Asian and Pacific Islanders, who constitute 9% of California's population. 39% of all U.S. Asians reside in California.¹
- The five California counties with the highest proportions of Asians and Pacific Islander residents are: San Francisco (28.4%), Santa Clara (16.8%), San Mateo (16.2%), Solano (11.9%), and San Joaquin (11.6%).³
- The Asian Pacific community now constitutes almost 30% of San Francisco's population. This is the highest concentration in any city in North America.²
- 42 of California's 58 counties have seen their Asian-Pacific populations at least double since the last census.⁽⁶⁾

BLACKS

- A small proportion of blacks are found in California (7%) than in the nation as a whole (12%).¹
- The five California counties with the highest proportions of black residents are Alameda (17.4%), Solano (12.9%), Los Angeles (10.5%), San Francisco (10.5%), and Contra Costa (9.1%).³

AMERICAN INDIAN, ESKIMO, AND ALEUT

- A slightly lower proportion of American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut residents are found in California (.6%) than in the nation as a whole (.8%); and California is not among the states with the highest concentrations of this ethnic group.¹
- The five California counties with the highest proportions of residents who are American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut are Alpine (23%), Inyo (9.1%), Del Norte (6.0%), Humboldt (5.2%), and Trinity (4.5%).³

Sources

¹Barringer, F. (1995, March 11). Census Shows Profound Change in Racial Makeup of the Nation. The New York Times.

²McLeod, R. (1992, February 26). The Challenge Posed by State's Ethnic Mix. San Francisco Chronicle.

³California State Census Data Center. Report C-90-PL-1: Population and Per Cent Distribution by Race

⁴Joint Legislature's Committee for Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education, California Faces California's Future: Education for Citizenship in a Multi-Cultural Democracy, 1988

⁵The Americans Among Us: When the Minorities are the Majority. Proceedings of a Conference Sponsored by the Center for Cross-Cultural Research and Social Work Practice, Department of Social Work Education, San Francisco State University, may, 1989.

⁶Viviano, F. (1992, February 27). Asian Population Booming in the U.S. San Francisco Chronicle.

ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CALIFORNIA COUNTIES*

	HISPANIC		ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER		BLACK		AMERICAN INDIAN, ESKIMO, OR ALEUT		OTHER		ALL GROUPS COMBINED	
	% of Co- Populati on	Cou nty Ran k	% of Co. Pop	Count y Rank	% of Co Pop.	Count y Rank	% of Co. Pop.	Count y Rank	% of Co. Pop.	Count y Rank	Total % Co. Pop.	Count y Rank
ALAMEDA	14.2%	27	14.4%	4	17.4%	1	0.5%	51	0.2%	9	53.2%	7
ALPINE	6.6%	49	0.4%	56	0.4%	53	23.1%	1	0.0%	58	69.4%	26
AMADOR	8.4%	41	0.7%	52	5.6%	12	1.5%	23	0.2%	14	83.7%	39
BUTTE	7.5%	45	2.7%	30	1.2%	37	1.6%	22	0.1%	44	86.9%	45
CALAVERAS	5.4%	52	0.6%	54	0.6%	47	1.9%	16	0.1%	43	91.5%	56
COLUSA	33.3%	9	2.0%	34	0.5%	49	1.9%	17	0.3%	5	62.1%	17
CONTRA COSTA	11.4%	33	9.2%	9	9.1%	5	0.6%	50	0.2%	25	69.7%	27
DEL NORTE	10.3%	39	1.8%	36	3.6%	20	6.0%	3	0.2%	17	78.0%	33
EL DORADO	7.0%	48	1.8%	37	0.5%	51	1.0%	30	0.1%	51	89.7%	52
FRESNO	35.5%	5	8.1%	13	4.7%	17	0.8%	39	0.3%	2	50.7%	4
GLENN	20.0%	22	3.1%	27	0.5%	48	1.8%	19	0.1%	35	74.4%	31
HUMBOLDT	4.2%	55	1.9%	35	0.8%	42	5.2%	4	0.1%	45	87.9%	48
IMPERIAL	65.8%	1	1.5%	40	2.1%	28	1.4%	24	0.1%	30	29.0%	1
INYO	8.4%	40	0.9%	45	0.4%	56	9.1%	2	0.1%	39	81.1%	36
KERN	28.0%	11	2.7%	29	5.3%	13	1.0%	28	0.2%	8	62.7%	18
KINGS	34.1%	7	3.4%	24	7.6%	8	0.9%	36	0.4%	1	53.6%	8
LAKE	7.2%	47	0.9%	46	1.8%	30	2.0%	15	0.1%	41	88.1%	49
LASSEN	10.4%	36	1.1%	44	6.2%	9	2.9%	11	0.0%	53	79.4%	34
LOS ANGELES	37.8%	4	10.2%	7	10.5%	3	0.3%	57	0.2%	6	40.8%	2
MADERA	34.5%	6	1.2%	41	2.6%	24	1.3%	25	0.2%	15	60.1%	13
MARIN	7.8%	43	3.9%	22	3.3%	22	0.3%	58	0.1%	37	84.6%	42
MARIPOSA	4.9%	53	0.8%	48	0.8%	40	4.1%	6	0.1%	48	89.3%	51
MENDOCINO	10.3%	39	1.1%	43	0.6%	45	3.6%	9	0.1%	40	84.4%	41
MERCED	32.6%	10	7.9%	15	4.4%	18	0.6%	43	0.3%	4	54.2%	9
MODOC	7.2%	46	0.4%	57	0.8%	41	3.9%	7	0.1%	42	87.6%	46
MONO	11.3%	34	1.1%	42	0.4%	54	3.4%	10	0.1%	52	83.7%	39
MONTEREY	33.6%	8	7.1%	17	6.0%	10	0.6%	46	0.3%	3	52.3%	6
NAPA	14.4%	26	3.1%	28	1.1%	38	0.6%	44	0.1%	33	80.8%	35
NEVADA	4.2%	56	0.8%	49	0.2%	57	0.9%	33	0.0%	57	93.9%	58
ORANGE	23.4%	17	10.0%	8	1.6%	32	0.4%	56	0.1%	34	64.5%	20
PLACER	8.0%	42	2.1%	33	0.6%	46	0.9%	35	0.1%	50	88.3%	50
PLUMAS	4.6%	54	0.6%	55	0.8%	43	2.8%	12	0.1%	47	91.2%	55
RIVERSIDE	26.3%	15	3.3%	26	5.1%	16	0.7%	41	0.2%	20	64.4%	19
SACRAMENTO	11.7%	31	8.8%	11	9.0%	6	0.9%	31	0.2%	21	69.3%	25
SAN BENITO	45.8%	2	1.8%	38	0.5%	52	0.6%	48	0.2%	13	51.2%	5
SAN BERNARDINO	26.7%	12	3.9%	23	7.7%	7	0.7%	42	0.2%	10	60.8%	15
SAN DIEGO	20.4%	20	7.4%	16	6.0%	11	0.6%	45	0.2%	27	65.4%	21
SAN FRANCISCO	13.9%	28	28.4%	1	10.5%	4	0.4%	54	0.2%	12	46.6%	3
SAN JOAQUIN	23.4%	16	11.6%	6	5.2%	15	0.8%	37	0.2%	22	58.8%	12
SAN LUIS	13.3%	30	2.7%	31	2.0%	29	0.8%	38	0.1%	36	81.2%	37
SAN MATEO	17.6%	24	16.2%	3	5.2%	14	0.4%	55	0.1%	29	60.4%	14
SANTA BARBARA	26.6%	13	4.1%	20	2.5%	25	0.6%	47	0.1%	28	66.1%	23
SANTA CLARA	21.0%	19	16.8%	2	3.5%	21	0.4%	53	0.2%	23	58.1%	11
SANTA CRUZ	20.4%	21	3.3%	25	1.0%	39	0.6%	49	0.2%	19	74.5%	32
SHASTA	3.8%	57	1.8%	39	0.7%	44	2.5%	14	0.1%	49	91.1%	54
SIERRA	5.5%	51	0.2%	58	0.2%	58	1.8%	20	0.0%	56	92.2%	57
SISKIYOU	5.9%	50	0.8%	47	1.6%	33	3.9%	88	0.0%	54	87.9%	46
SOLANO	13.4%	29	11.9%	5	12.9%	2	0.7%	40	0.2%	18	60.9%	16
SONOMA	10.6%	35	2.6%	32	1.4%	36	0.9%	32	0.1%	38	84.3%	40
STANISLAUS	21.8%	18	4.9%	18	1.6%	31	0.9%	34	0.2%	26	70.5%	28
SUTTER	16.4%	25	8.9%	10	1.5%	34	1.3%	26	0.2%	16	71.6%	29
TEHAMA	10.3%	37	0.7%	53	0.5%	50	1.7%	21	0.1%	46	86.7%	44
TRINITY	3.3%	58	0.8%	50	0.4%	55	4.5%	5	0.0%	55	91.0%	53
TULARE	38.8%	3	4.0%	21	1.4%	35	1.0%	27	0.2%	7	54.6%	10
TUOLUMNA	7.7%	44	0.7%	51	3.2%	23	1.8%	18	0.2%	24	86.4%	43
VENTURA	26.4%	14	4.9%	19	2.2%	26	0.5%	52	0.1%	32	65.9%	22
YOLO	20.0%	23	8.1%	12	2.1%	27	1.0%	29	0.2%	11	68.6%	24
YUBA	11.6%	32	7.9%	14	4.0%	19	2.6%	13	0.1%	31	73.7%	30
CALIFORNIA	25.8%		9.1%		7.0%		0.6%		0.2%		42.8%	

(*)"%" refers to the per cent of county residents who belong to the ethnic group shown in the column. Counties are ranked according to the proportion of their populations that belong to each ethnic group. A rank of "1" means that the county has the highest proportion of residents in a particular ethnic group, when compared to other counties. A rank of "58" means that it has the lowest proportion, when compared to other counties.

Data are taken from the California State Census Data Center, Report C90-PL-1: Population and Per Cent Distribution by Race